ABSTRACT

A system and method for managing a plurality of sever nodes. In one embodiment, the sever nodes are organized into groups referred to as "instances." Each instance includes a group of redundant sever nodes and a dispatcher for distributing service requests to each of the sever nodes. In one embodiment, a hierarchical configuration data object is stored within a database and is centrally accessible by all of the servers from all of the instances. The hierarchical configuration data object organizes configuration data and binary data in a manner which simplifies sever node management in a large enterprise network. For example, in one embodiment of the invention, when starting up servers and dispatchers within an instance, the server layout of the instance is retrieved from the hierarchical configuration data object. In addition, binaries and configuration parameters stored locally on the servers/dispatcher are initially compared with the binaries and configuration parameters stored within the hierarchical configuration data object. If the binaries and configuration parameters stored locally are out-of-date, then new binaries/parameters are downloaded from a central database.